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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTANIS TELL NATO THEY WANT TO ENHANCE  
AFGHANISTAN COOPERATION

Classified By: Pol-Econ Chief Steven Fagin, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[¶1.](#) (C) NATO Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero held meetings in Astana on September 11 with Defense Minister Akhmetov, Foreign Minister Tazhin, Security Council Secretary Suleymenov, and officials from the Ministry of Emergency Situations. In a readout he gave to resident NATO-country ambassadors, Bisogniero explained that he had very positive meetings with his Kazakhstani government interlocutors that exceeded his expectations.

[¶2.](#) (C) Bisogniero stressed to the ambassadors that his visit -- apparently the highest-level NATO visit to Kazakhstan ever -- was not connected to the Georgia conflict, but rather had been arranged before it. He said that he had stressed three points in his meetings with the Kazakhstans. First, NATO views Kazakhstan as the key country in the Central Asia region. Second, NATO looks forward to enhanced engagement with Central Asia, despite the events in Georgia. Third, Kazakhstan can have good relations with both Russia and NATO. This last point, Bisogniero maintained, helped dispel Kazakhstani misgivings.

[¶3.](#) (C) Foreign Minister Tazhin told Bisogniero that Kazakhstan appreciated NATO's role in ensuring Afghan security and stability and is eager to become a stronger partner with NATO in Afghanistan. Defense Minister Akhmetov said that Kazakhstan is willing to deploy two officers to ISAF headquarters in Afghanistan, as well as medics to a Slovak medical unit stationed there. Akhmetov promised to assist in moving forward the NATO-Kazakhstan transit agreement for the Northern GLOC, which, he explained, fell under the purview of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, rather than the Ministry of Defense. Tazhin expressed consternation at the fact that NATO hashed out a transit agreement with Russia first, and only approached Kazakhstan later. This gave the misimpression that Kazakhstan did not want to be helpful on Afghanistan and had to be dragged along through a fait accompli between NATO and Russia.

[¶4.](#) (SBU) Ministry of Emergency Situations officials told Bisogniero that they wanted increased cooperation with NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Center (EADRCC). They also requested NATO assistance in enhancing their capability to respond to oil rig disasters. Bisogniero promised the Ministry that he would look into this.

[¶5.](#) (SBU) Bisogniero reminded the NATO-country ambassadors that in June 2009, there would be meetings in Kazakhstan of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) Security Forum and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. These would be important opportunities to further increase NATO-Kazakhstan cooperation.

MILAS